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There's lots here to keep you going for June, July and August.



COVER: This Saskatoon backyard is a perfect staycation location. See *The Great Escape*, p. 8. Photo: Kevin Greggain

HOME Front



Photo: Kevin Greggain

What's the most beautiful phrase in the English language? According to author Henry James, it's "summer afternoon." Here's hoping that you're about to enjoy this edition of Saskatoon HOME while sipping on a cooler, drinking in every moment of a magnificent Saskatchewan summer afternoon. It's raining, you say? Regardless, we've got a full basket of features and tidbits to keep you entertained.

You'll notice we've taken a green theme, minus the guilt trip. Our interview with Ronn LePage, creator of the Net Zero home exhibit, explains why energy efficiency can become affordable for prospective home-buyers (p.31). One alternative to traditional heating is geothermal, and once you read how you can make it happen in your home, you might want to dig deeper—literally (p. 26).

Think of a light bulb. Now think again. The day is fast approaching when a kid will come across one of your old incandescent light bulbs (i.e., what we still call a "light bulb") in the attic and ask what it is (p.56). They'll also be asking what Santa Claus is supposed to do on Christmas Eve, because you don't have a chimney (p.18).

Efficiency, technology—and art? If you doubt it, have a look at Quality Stone, (p. 54), then see how solar panels become inspiration in the hands of stained glass artist Sarah Hall (p. 36).

A true home must always blend the practical with the personal. In the second of our three-part series, we discover how a home achieves that full

expression for artist Gwen Klypak and her architect husband Heney (p.49). We then travel from their rural retreat to an urban oasis, the ultimate "staycation" getaway—complete with palm trees—right here in Saskatoon (p.9). If palm trees aren't in your yard plans, what about cherries? Read about these new climate-hardy fruit trees developed at the University of Saskatchewan and now available to the home gardener (p.16).

This issue of HOME launches new regular features, with something for everyone. *The Yard Planner's Almanac* (p.58) has yard tips for every month of the year. *Homeowners and the Law* (p.7) answers a question that might have crossed your mind, and might keep you out of court. *Home Story* (p.28) tell the tale of ordinary folks like us who take on a home reno project. (If you've got a story to tell—*who doesn't?*—let us know!) To close off this edition, *HOMETown Reflections* (p.39) recounts the more glorious days of public transit in our city. (You know there's a green lesson there, too.)

Among the stories, you'll find other great resources for your home—our advertisers. Got questions? All you have to do is ask them. These guys know their stuff.

Yours at HOME,

AMANDA SOULODRE
PUBLISHER

Got suggestions? Comments? Questions?
Want to see back issues of HOME? Visit
saskatoon-home.ca.

HOME

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Today is a good day to learn more, so let's talk.

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Nurturing Saskatoon's Urban Forest




One of the best ways to reduce urban pollution is to plant more trees. Fortunately, thousands of new trees are planted annually in Saskatoon's residential yards. Unfortunately, 40 per cent of those trees won't make it past year two.

"Many new homeowners buy a tree, plunk it in the ground then don't continue to nurture it," says Norm Altrogge, president and general manager of Sawyer's Trees & Landscapes.

Taking extra care of your trees' root systems in the first five years of their life is key. "Our Tree Keepers Program is a key green initiative where a tree has a better chance of surviving its first five years if deep root fertilization is utilized," says Altrogge, whose company plants 4,000–8,000 trees annually in the Saskatoon area. "This process feeds the tree through its root system, which is where the tree derives its nourishment." Sawyer's Nutri Leaf Deep Root Fertilization, a soluble fertilizer solution, is injected

with a probe 15 centimetres below the thick turf surface, near the large root structure of the tree.

Since many soils do not provide adequate nutrition, deep root fertilization – a mixture of nitrogen, phosphorus, potash and micro nutrients – boosts tree growth. Deep root fertilization also provides a secondary value to the tree's survival. "When the tree is fertilized, its leaves become even more waxy, which helps to repel insects and disease," says Altrogge.

Altrogge says more healthy, fast-growing trees adds to what he calls the "urban forest." He says trees are an important carbon-capture method that helps to combat carbonbased pollution; as the city grows, more trees generate better air quality. "Most people don't actually see how many trees make up a city unless you can view the urban forest from a tall building or from an airplane." 

D. GRANT BLACK

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Homeowners and the Law

In this new regular feature, HOME answers a legal question that might be on your mind.



Parker Beware

Your neighbor's old, unlicensed truck has been parked in front of your house, unmoved, for a month. Jamie Nykolaishen, a Saskatoon lawyer who specializes in real estate with WMCZ (Wallace Meschishnick Clackson Zawada) comments on what to do:

Nykolaishen suggests, "The first step is good old common sense. Knock on the door, say 'please move your truck,' and give him or her a reasonable time to rectify the situation – maybe after supper if they

are just coming home from work – remembering you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar."

Failing this approach Nykolaishen says you'll find the legal answers in the City of Saskatoon bylaws. City of Saskatoon Traffic Bylaw No. 7,200 gives us the story in Section 14: "Except as otherwise indicated by a sign or otherwise provided for in this Bylaw, a person shall not park a vehicle on a street for more than 36 hours."

Section 19 further clarifies that, "the operator of a motor vehicle or trailer which must

be registered under *The Traffic Safety Act* shall not park the vehicle on a street or in any of the parking lots listed in Section 58, unless it displays license plates for the current year."

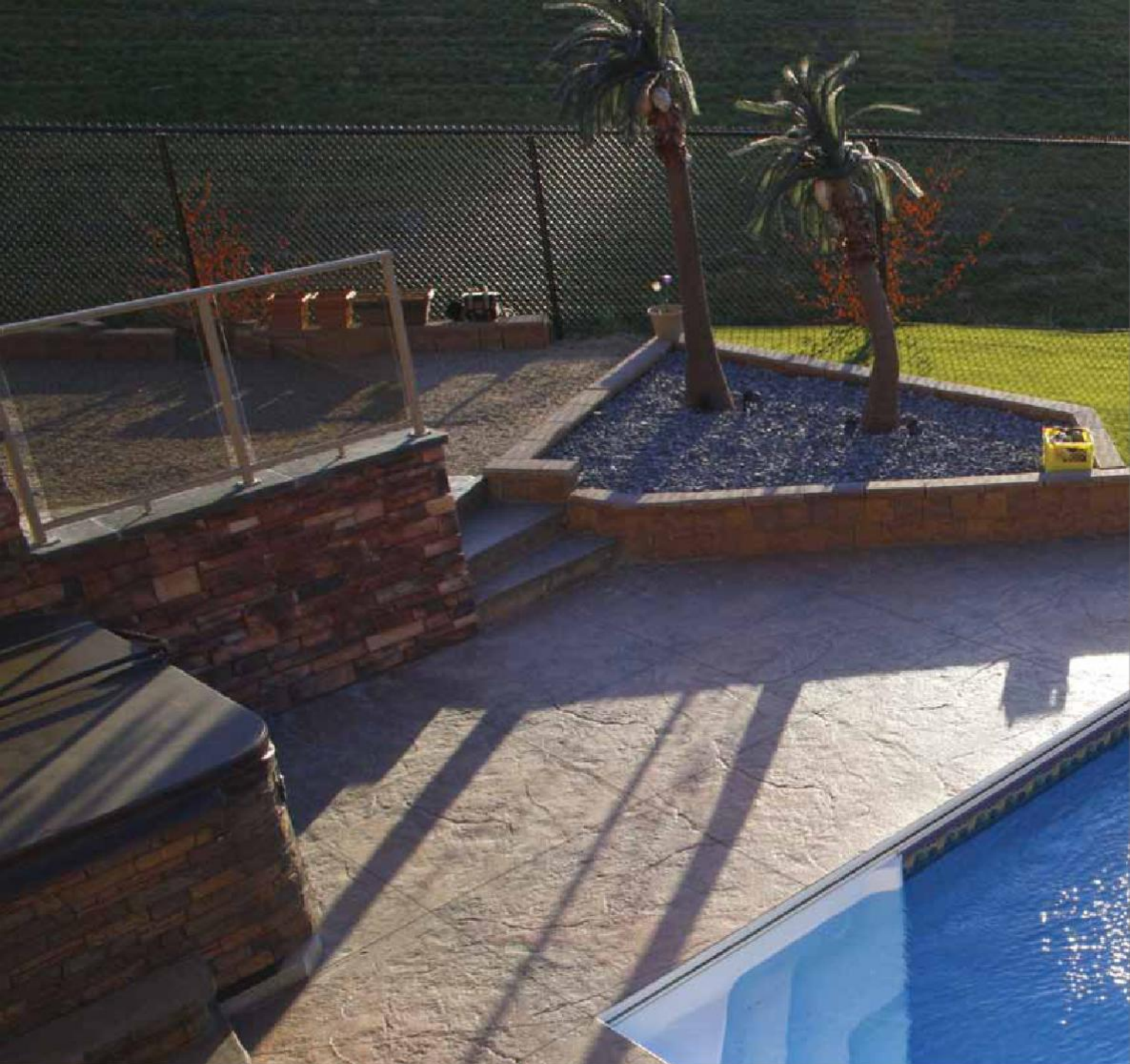
Section 22 states, "The owner or operator of a vehicle that is unlawfully placed or kept on any street, parking place or other public place is subject to an additional fine as listed in Schedule No. 10 after the elapse of two hours from the time the previous Notice of Violation was issued." In other words, if you don't move the truck

right away, it could cost you even more.

Nykolaishen also says homeowners need to know these rules. "In this case, you should call the City of Saskatoon about an uncooperative neighbor unwilling to move the truck." **H**


TOM KENNEDY

The above is general information only and is not advice based on any actual instance or specific circumstances. Contact a lawyer for legal advice. You can find Saskatoon's bylaws at www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/CityClerksOffice/Pages/Bylaws.aspx



THE GREAT ES

Craig Silliphant



The centre piece of the Jaman's backyard is their pool and hot tub, but it doesn't end there...

Photos: Kevin Greggain

CAPE

On your next holiday, you could jet off to the South of France, see Atlantic Canada, or bask in the warm Mexican Riviera - or you could recharge your batteries without leaving the comfort of your own couch by trading your 'vacation' for a 'staycation.'

Summer 2011 Saskatoon **HOME 9**



The Spanish-influenced outdoor decor captures the "Santa Fe mood" which started with the interior.

According to some of our sources, the word 'staycation' was actually coined by Saskatchewan's own Brent Butt on an episode of *Corner Gas* in 2005. In case you've been living under a rock, a staycation means that you

take a vacation without leaving your city. You take time off work, but instead of cramming screaming kids into a car or plane (which is probably prone to giving you an ulcer more than relaxation), you kick back and unwind at home.

A good staycation can save you upwards of \$10,000 for a family holiday for four. Ironically, after paying for lodgings, transportation, food, and activities for your family, you may need to undo all the

relaxing you did by working some overtime upon your return. This is why staycations have taken on a life of their own in the last few years, becoming widely utilized in North America.

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Retailers push staycations as well; they are of economic benefit to local businesses, because you spend money at home instead of abroad. Some people may even choose to stay in a hotel in their own city as part of their staycation, just to get away from their home while not wandering too far.

One Saskatoon couple has taken the idea of a stay-at-home vacation to heart so much so that they've incorporated their love of the staycation with the landscaping and décor of their home. Calvin and Nikki Jaman have built their own backyard oasis, where they can enjoy all the fruits of a tropical vacation without the time-consuming annoyance of security lines at

the airport or any of the other hassles one encounters when on holiday. Saskatchewan winters may force us to seek cover in warmer parts of the world, but the Jamans think our prairie summers can often be as nice as a day on the beach in Hawaii.

"We like the beach," says Nikki Jaman. "We go to Hawaii every winter, but we work all summer, so we can't get away as much. So the whole idea is to have it in the backyard when we are home. We bring Hawaii home for the summer."

The centrepiece of the Jaman's backyard is their pool and hot tub, but it doesn't end there. They've

How do you save energy?



HOME's recent survey on Facebook gave us a glimpse at what our readers are doing to save energy in their home:

- 33%** Turned down the thermostat
- 17%** Installed low flow toilets or shower heads
- 15%** Programmed thermostat to lower temperature when we are away from home or in bed
- 12%** Converted to CFL or other more energy efficient lighting
- 10%** Purchased energy efficient appliances
- 8%** Other energy efficient practices not listed
- 5%** Installed new windows



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incorporated faux palm trees and lush artificial grass to really sell the vision, plus authentic looking concrete and stonework. There is an upper deck with a barbeque, and below it, a seating area with a natural gas fire table and a television.

"Santa Fe; a Spanish-type mood was what I was going for," explains Jaman. "In fact, it started on the inside of the house and we continued the theme outside. It's a nice place to entertain. We can have a lot of people outside, and then the pool is there, as well as the hot tub. People love it."

While it's easy to envy the set up the Jamans have built, you don't have to commit your home and finances to the idea to enjoy a staycation. But it is a good idea to set some ground rules in order to really feel like you've unplugged. With a staycation, planning is key.

Number one, forget that work exists.

It's harder to go 'off the grid' when you're not thousands of miles away from work and home. But the whole point is to relax and recharge, so you'll want to adhere to some simple rules. The specifics will change with each person, but it may entail not checking your email or taking work calls. Some people go as far as to unplug their phones completely.

Work around the house is the same; you didn't take time off to get done all those little household projects you've been meaning to catch up on. Staycationers can finish a stay-at-home vacation feeling unsatisfied if they allow themselves to fall into their daily monotony, errands, and other menial tasks in their vacation at home.

The planning continues beyond setting the ground rules. If you're not allowed to check your email, what exactly are you going to do for a week? You need to plan activities, and it's a good idea to discuss

this with your family as well, so everyone has input and compromise into what you'll do during the time off.

Ultimately, what you plan will depend on who you are and what you enjoy doing in your downtime. Perhaps the best part about the staycation is that you get to custom design it for you and your family. Even at the most posh resorts, you're at the whim of their schedules, menus, and activities - at home, you can do almost anything you want. For Nikki Jaman, this means getting out to her backyard oasis first thing in the morning for a cup of coffee and a slice of solitude.

"The mornings are actually the nicest," she says, "That's when it's the calmest to sit outside. I sit around the fire table and watch the news first thing in the morning. That's my favorite." 

See p.14 for Staycation suggestions!



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SOME STUPENDOUS STAYCATION SUGGESTIONS:

- Be a tourist in your own town. Pretend you're a visitor - what would you go see? What attractions are there that you always mean to go to, but never actually get around to checking out? You can visit local museums, parks, animal sanctuaries, festivals in the city and more. Get some culture; just because you're relaxing doesn't mean you need to avoid using your brain.
- Attend a community theatre or dinner theatre production. It may not be what you normally do, but part of the fun of travel is having new experiences. There are things in your community you've never seen that are as fun as things you'd find on a holiday elsewhere.
- Cook more; create an opulent and exciting meal for the whole family. Have you ever attempted to make homemade pasta or something else that takes love and time?
- Cook less; you're on holidays - go out to a few nice restaurants, budget allowing, of course.
- Have a movie marathon, renting all the movies you've been meaning to catch up on, or all the films by your favourite actor or actress.
- Mix and match some of these ideas; rent a bunch of famous Italian movies while making a spectacular Italian dinner and have an Italian themed night.
- Recharge your body and mind, and get romantic doing it by planning a spa day together.
- Whether you have kids or not, get some fresh air and reconnect with nature by camping out underneath the stars in your backyard.
- Attend a workshop for something you've always wanted to learn about. Woodworking? Guitar playing? Cake decorating? It's all about getting your mind off your real life, and focusing on a hobby will distract you from your daily grind.



- Hit the library or bookstore; there's nothing more relaxing than sitting in your backyard under the prairie sun reading a good book.
- Put a picnic together. Take the kids and some PB&J (peanut butter and jam), or leave them with the grandparents, get some champagne and caviar, and make it a romantic affair.
- Have a game night; challenge each other at everything from board games like Scrabble to sports games on the Xbox.
- Have a party! Just because you're escaping from your normal life doesn't mean you can't invite your friends and family over for a few pina colodas on the back deck. Spend time with the people you love!



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Romancing the Cherries

This August, environmentally conscious and savvy green thumbs will see the fruits of their labour, literally, when their new species of cherry trees will bear fruit. It will also be a special season for the University of Saskatchewan, where the new varieties – called the Romance Series – were developed.

The U of S program began over 40 years ago to propagate a cherry able to withstand the province's harsh winters. From the original Carmine Jewel, there are now five new varieties of Saskatchewan dwarf sour cherries available. As their names suggest, they have been dubbed the Romance series.

Bob Bors, Assistant Professor at the University of Saskatchewan, Plant Sciences Department, says these prairie-tested cherries have a host of characteristics that make them easy to grow, good to eat, decorative and organic.

"Because they've been designed and adapted to this cold climate," says Bors, "the



insects that usually would eat the cherries or cause diseases don't usually attack them here, so we're able to grow our cherries without the use of any pesticides at all."

"Our trees are also more compact, which makes them ideal for hand picking," adds Bors. "They're fairly short and generally only grow from six to eight feet tall, whereas other sour cherries around the world are generally around 20 feet tall." Thus, they are easier to take care of and require less water once they become firmly established.

But for Bors, the biggest benefit is the local aspect. "You're also getting local food right from your own backyard without the

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Photo courtesy of the U of S Plants and Sciences Department

environmental footprint caused by shipping it."

With yields that total anywhere from 20 lbs. for the average gardener to 70 lbs for the truly talented, the cherries have a higher sweetness level due to the longer days and cooler nights that work to build up higher sugar content.

Choosing the best of the series is simply a matter of personal preference. "It really depends on what someone is looking for," says Bors. "Would you rather have a higher quality, a higher yield, or a red one that looks like what everyone thinks a cherry should look like?"

For those who like the cherry pie colour of a traditional cherry, Bors recommends the Valentine. "It doesn't taste as high quality as some of the others in the series, but it's still better tasting than any you can find in Ontario or even B.C. for that matter."

For those looking for a tree that's even more compact than the typical dwarf tree, and perfect for smaller areas, Bors suggests the Crimson Passion. "Crimson Passion has the smallest bush and the crunchiest cherry," says Bors. "It almost seems like it's halfway to being a

sweet cherry."

The Cupid generally blooms near the end of May, so even if a late-season Saskatchewan snow storm blew in you would still see some great results. "Cupid flowers almost a week later than the others," says Bors. "So if you had a late frost, you'd maybe get some cherries off Cupid that you wouldn't get off the others."

Rounding out the series of five is the romantic pairing of Romeo and Juliet. Both produce high quality, good tasting cherries, though Juliet seems to ripen a slight bit earlier than Romeo. And while Romeo has had a little

bit of a problem with winter die-back, it also produces a year earlier than the other varieties, and at times seems almost over-productive and heavy with fruit.

It's Juliet that has won Bors' own heart, simply because of the cherry's general flavour and overall productivity. "If I were to plant just one, I'd plant Juliet."

Whichever choice you make, romancing these cherries will ensure that both your yard and the environment – not to mention your quest for home-grown fruit – are well taken care of. 🍒

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OBSOLETE CHIMNEYS AND THE STORY OF ANOTHER FAMOUS ORR

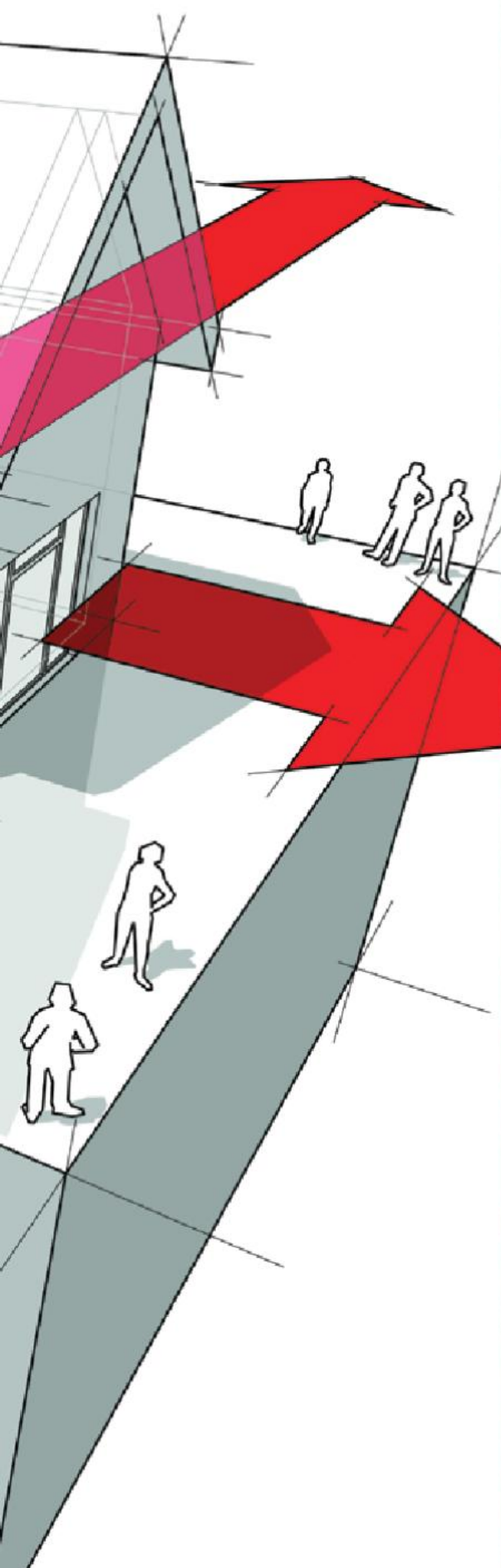
Tom Kennedy

Even in retirement Saskatoon's Harold Orr is passionate about his desire to see people save money on heating their home. A true pioneer in thinking 'green', Harold was developing technology and processes for measuring heat loss, air movement and ideas for conserving energy in a house when most of this magazine's readers were in diapers.

Call him King of Heat Loss, Detective Draft or the Ventilation Avenger, his studies with the National Research Council led to construction of the first energy efficient house – the Saskatchewan Conservation House in Regina in the late '70s. His most famous work is around the

house on Deborah Crescent in Saskatoon called the "chainsaw retrofit" – where the chimney, eaves and overhangs were cut off, the house was wrapped in polyethylene, super-insulated and then sided and finished off. But more on that later.

As a retrospective to the retrofit, let's go back to the mid-70's and remember that an oil crisis loomed. Cars got smaller and more fuel efficient. Dresses were short and hair continued to be long – especially on men. But in the world of research the focus was on solar. Harold says it was tough to do research on anything at the time that didn't have the words sun or solar in them. 



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Working in Saskatoon at the National Research Council (NRC), Harold was asked to sit in on the early meetings of the committee working on a solar house concept and provide expertise. "It was design by committee, so you have to take that with a grain of salt, but the idea was to find or at least demonstrate a solar option."

Insulation at the time was R7 in walls, but the question for this demonstration house was 'How much is right?' Harold suggested R44 in the walls, R60 in the blown cellulose ceiling. This was unheard of at the time. Considering the home was in Regina it was decided not to go with a basement, and super-insulate the floor to R30 instead. Harold thought that sticking with the super insulation and making the house airtight was enough, but the government of the day wanted "solar" so vacuum tube collectors and a huge tank were installed to make the solar connections. To maximize the sun's benefit, the house faced south, but there were no windows on the east or west and a just a small one on the north.


The cost was about \$60,000 in 1977 dollars, so significantly more than a regular house was going for at that time. Even so, tens of thousands of visitors toured 411 Rink Avenue in Regina. The house is still there, warm and occupied.

Harold began to work on other many other homes using high insulation values, measuring and minimizing heat loss as the main concept. One option could be to super-insulate a house and just use baseboard heaters to heat the house, which was easy – no ductwork – and just use natural gas for hot water.

Orr wrote his thesis on measuring air leakage in buildings using a tracer gas (helium) and sensors that measured air loss. However, that research didn't tell you how big the holes in the house were, so his later work also included inventing a "blower door" to pressure test houses by measuring air blowing out of a house.

Another idea was to retrofit an existing house using these principles and Harold found a house that Central Mortgage and Housing (CMHC) was willing to donate to the cause. This location – 31 Deborah Crescent – became the site of Orr's 'chainsaw retrofit' which now approaches legend in the annals of early North American energy conservation work.

The basic concept was to keep heat inside in the winter and disperse it in the summer by wrapping the house in a 'ziplock bag' and super-insulating on top of this protective layer to keep the bag warm. You would tie the bag (hence you lop off the chimney and eaves etc) to make the house airtight and you'd save a bundle on heating and cooling wrapped in this cocoon.

Ever the teacher, Harold explains air and heat loss in the form of a pie chart cut into thirds. "You're going to lose a third of your heat through the conventional way that everyone knows about – your ceiling, the walls and windows and doors." However, most people concentrate less on the other two thirds which is one-third loss from your basement and one third simple air leakage, which in many ways is the big picture problem that Harold focused on. 

STREET NAMES

BORDEN CRESCENT

Borden Crescent and Place in Confederation Park remember lawyer and politicians Sir Robert Laird Borden (1854-1937). First elected to the Commons in 1896, he became Conservative leader in 1901 and was prime minister from 1911 to 1920. He entered business after leaving politics and was chancellor of Queen's University from 1924 to 1930.



From Saskatoon's History in Street Names by John Duerkop. Used with permission from Purish Publishing Ltd., Saskatoon.

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Before chainsaw retrofit

He took 31 Deborah Crescent and determined where the air leaks were by pressure testing. He found that roughly half the air leakage was from the walls, windows, doors, the attic of the house and from floor joists.

The first step was to cut off the chimney (Yes, he did use a chainsaw, but not actually on this house.) cut the eaves

and overhangs, and then wrap this area with polyethylene vapour/air barrier.

Harold added a foot of insulation from the floor joist header upwards, strapped the roof and put a foot of fibre-glass insulation on the roof. This keeps the vapour barrier warm and prevents the dreaded condensation problem of airtight houses. "You're

not doing things properly unless you do the roof," Harold adds. The roof was sheathed and shingled, and new rafters were added to create the desired overhang. Harold added insulation to windows and doors on the inside, then moved them into place to be flush with the siding to finish.

Conventional thinking was to not insulate the basement

too much, but Harold knew that he had to not just insulate the basement all the way down but also add insulation to the basement floor. The basement ended up having R40 in the walls and R15 in the floor, which added to the overall comfort level of the house.

The house ended up being heated with baseboards to measure electricity efficiency.



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After chainsaw retrofit

One baseboard was in the hall, one in the basement for a total of about 5,000 watts of installed heat capacity in the house.

In the end the house was comfortable even at 35 below. Only 5 BTU's out of a 1,000 BTU furnace needed to be used and the house is still warm and cozy 30 years later.

Are chimney's obsolete? Harold says yes they are. High efficiency furnaces and water heaters have made them obsolete; however, Harold adds, "You have to be careful about the ventilation of the house so that you provide more fresh air than you exhaust in the attic," and, the master adds, there is no quick fix to this except good construction, lots of in-

sulation in the right places, an understanding of how a house breathes and, when needed, calling on advice from places like the building section of the Saskatchewan Research Council. Harold believes there are thousands of what he calls "house dinosaurs" in Saskatoon that could benefit from the retrofit.

One final note. While chimney's may be obsolete, don't worry kids, Santa's smart and will find another way into your house at Christmas! 

Refer to NRC pdf for back-grounder, youtube site and his pdf presentation on a four suite apartment building pictured above available at <http://solaralberta.ca/events/super-insulated-retrofit>.

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Energy From the Ground Up

Earth Day takes on a whole new meaning when you think about geothermal energy. Dwight's NextEnergy describes it as 'energy from the ground up' and although it sounds complicated, once you understand the basic principles you are well on your way.

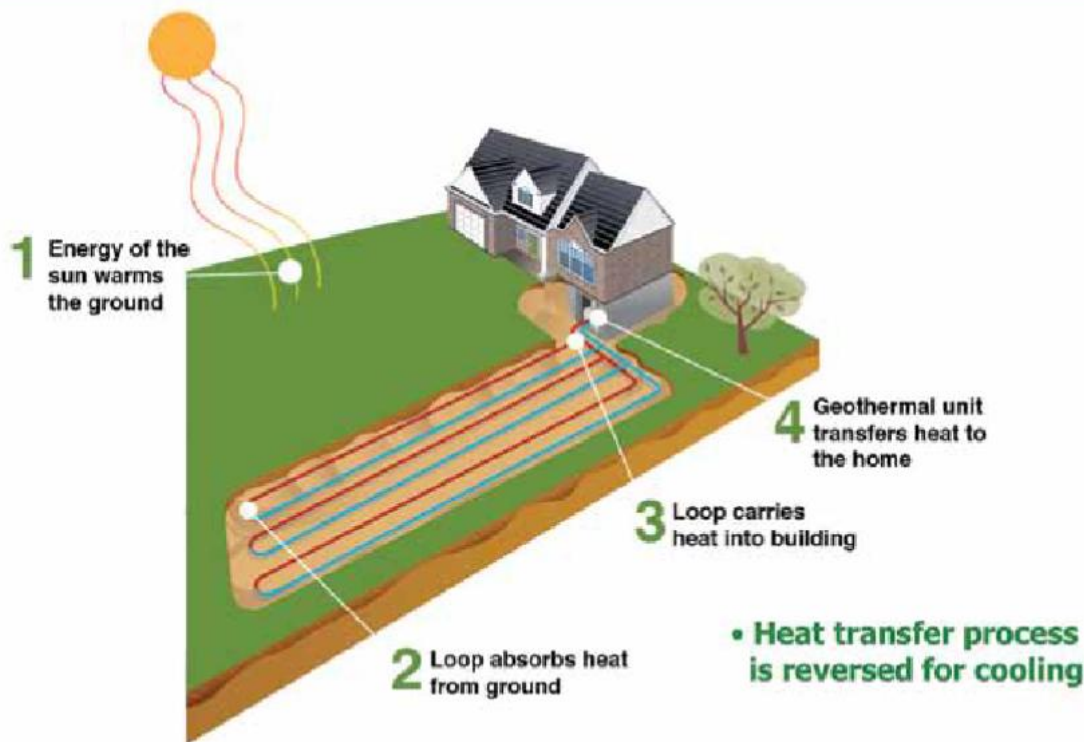
Put your hand behind your fridge. (It's hot; be careful.) Your fridge takes heat and disperses it somewhere else to cool your food. The same principle exists for geothermal technology where the very constant 10-12° C heat of the earth (down 2.4 meters/8 feet) can be dispersed to your home to warm it and taken away from your house to cool it.

The earth absorbs 50 per cent of the sun's energy. Holes buried vertically into the ground in your backyard or laid out in a grid pattern in eight-foot trenches are the first steps in developing a continuous loop system of pipes filled with an ethanol solution that captures natural ground energy and transports that energy rather like veins and arteries in and out of the home. This liquid provides an efficient way to carry heat into your house and disperse it back into the ground – depending on Saskatchewan weather requirements. In the summer the fluid in the pipes leaves your house in a warm state, but after circulating



Trenches are dug 8 feet deep and pipe laid in loop circuits

Photos courtesy of Dwight's Next Energy





underground, is cooled as the pipes exchange heat with the cooler earth and carry cooled air back into the house.

In the winter, after the pipes have done their work with the heat transfer and the geothermal unit in the house has done its work maximizing the heat value of the circulated fluid, the heat is then drawn off the heat exchanger in the unit and circulated throughout the house using the existing distribution systems.

An efficient geothermal unit (usually installed in the basement of your house to link up with the underground pipes) accepts and transfers energy from the pipes and disperses it through your house – either heating or cooling it, and providing hot water to the home. Standard geothermal equipment applications are forced air, hooked directly into your

home's ventilation system; water to water, used for in-floor heating; or a water to water system for radiators.

Brennan Kilmister from Dwight's NextEnergy says geothermal systems are an alternative to natural gas heating and cooling systems for homeowners. Kilmister, business manager for the company, says "Our customers are looking for a green, sustainable system and like the new technology of it all, the independence of it all (from the gas company), and the long term payback."

With over 1,000 installs over the ten year history of the firm, Kilmister is convinced the technology provides payback in five to eight years. "We work with the customer at the building stage to determine the number of loops needed and how we can be most efficient in developing a solution. We then continue to

converse with the customer at the various stages of install. When they are ready, we provide them with a 'how-to booklet' to deal with the trades needed to install the electricity, plumbing, etc. to finish the geothermal system."

Many customers of geothermal technology are rural, where connecting to natural gas can get expensive, and on acreages where a self-contained system has appeal. However, geothermal technology is beginning to appear in urban settings as well.

Wikipedia indicates that geothermal technology, as of 2007, is satisfying 0.07% of global primary energy consumption and being used in 70 countries around the world for various applications. Companies such as Dwight's NextEnergy would like to see that number go up. **H**

TOM KENNEDY

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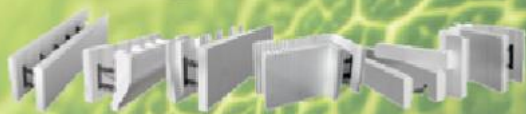


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A Grille's Best Friend



Grille's before refurbishment



Restoring original grilles helps retain character of 100-year-old home

Last April, about a year after moving to Saskatoon, William Hale found a wonderful character home in the vibrant neighbourhood of City Park just up the street from City Perk Coffee.

"I wanted to get a house that needed some repair. In other words, a house in a nice neighbourhood that was good value, and by putting my time into it I could at least break even with the investment and effort," Hale says.

He saw an opportunity for a renovation that could preserve the character

of the 1912 home, while adding all the features of a modern house.

It turned into an adventure.

"I found some interesting things in the walls, like a phone bill from 1932. We tore the walls down and there it was."

Little things make a big difference. The house had marvellous cast iron heat registers and cold air returns, except they were in terrible shape. Over the years, intricately inlaid parts had broken and gone missing, damper mechanisms seized or rusted away, the finishes dulled and tarnished.

"Initially, I looked around at the home supply places for grilles that would cover that space and still looked good," Hale says. Instead, all he could find were stamped

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registers. "I thought, I don't want this nice house that I put so much effort into refinishing in a classy, well thought-out way being diminished by some cheap sheet metal grilles!"

On the main floor, at least there was a matched set. The second floor contained mismatched registers, so Hale trekked off to the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store, where he found a set that came very close to the originals in design. Still, they weren't in great shape.

The third floor, requiring more extensive renovation, was less critical. Hale's main challenge was finding modern register covers that matched the floor.

But how to find someone who could restore the grilles? Home renovation and construction is largely a word-of-mouth business, Hale says. Someone at work recommended an electrician. The electrician recommended a plumber. The plumber recommended the furnace expert. The furnace guy recommended Tex Klassen.

So, in early January, Hale took the grilles to Tex Klassen Sales and Metal Fabrication which specializes in wholesale and retail HVAC supplies, stainless steel and metal fabrication, as well as sales of new residential and commercial grilles.

"William was very good," says owner Mark Rimmer. He didn't need things right away.

Typically, people can expect to wait two to four weeks."

Two of the three fence-like grilles from the main floor had to be replaced, Rimmer says. All of the registers needed new dampers. "We made the actuator lever and the mechanism to hold the damper open, as well as the dampers themselves," Rimmer explains.

There was a broken section in one of the cold air return grilles. "We made a piece and welded it in."

Everything was then sent off for sandblasting and powder coating. "Powder coating is a really durable finish," notes Rimmer, "Those grilles are stamped '1911'. That's 100 years old. They're good for another 100 years, whereas anything that you find nowadays, you'd be replacing two or three times during that time."

"We really like to do the specialty, one-off things," Rimmer adds.

The fabricators enjoyed the challenge and the results, he says. In fact, now the company is exploring expanding into manufacturing replica registers for older homes.

The results are as flawless as they are faithful to the original. It's impossible to tell where repairs have been made. "That's the idea," Rimmer says. "Everybody

that came in and saw them sitting on the floor waiting for William to pick them up just bee-lined right to them."

By early April, the refurbished grilles were back at the house, ready to be installed. **H**

DARRELL NOAKES

Before Photos courtesy of Tex Klassen

After Photos: Darrell Noakes



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Photo: Darrell Noakes


BUILDING THE AFFORDABLE NET ZERO HOME

Darrell Noakes

Since last October, VerEco's net zero home has been on display outside the Saskatoon Western Development Museum, where it will be open for tours until the end of September. A net zero home produces as much energy as it consumes annually. But what makes this home remarkable is that Saskatoon-based VerEco Homes has been able to build this super energy-efficient home at a cost that is competitive with conventional building construction — up to 75 per cent lower than previously accepted cost of net zero designs. Saskatoon HOME talked with VerEco founder Ronn LePage to find out more.

After 30 rewarding years working for an international accounting firm, Ronn LePage stepped away as senior partner to follow a passion for science — in particular, a master's degree in environmental strategy.

"If I'd done it five years ago, I'd have gone toward renewable energy," he says. "But I got really excited about green housing. My thesis shifted. In

the beginning it was 'Could you build a net-zero house?' We quickly found out you could, so then the question became, 'Could you build it cost-effectively?' Now, we've proven that you can — very cost effectively. So now my question is, 'Why aren't people doing this?' 'Why isn't everybody building homes like this?'" 

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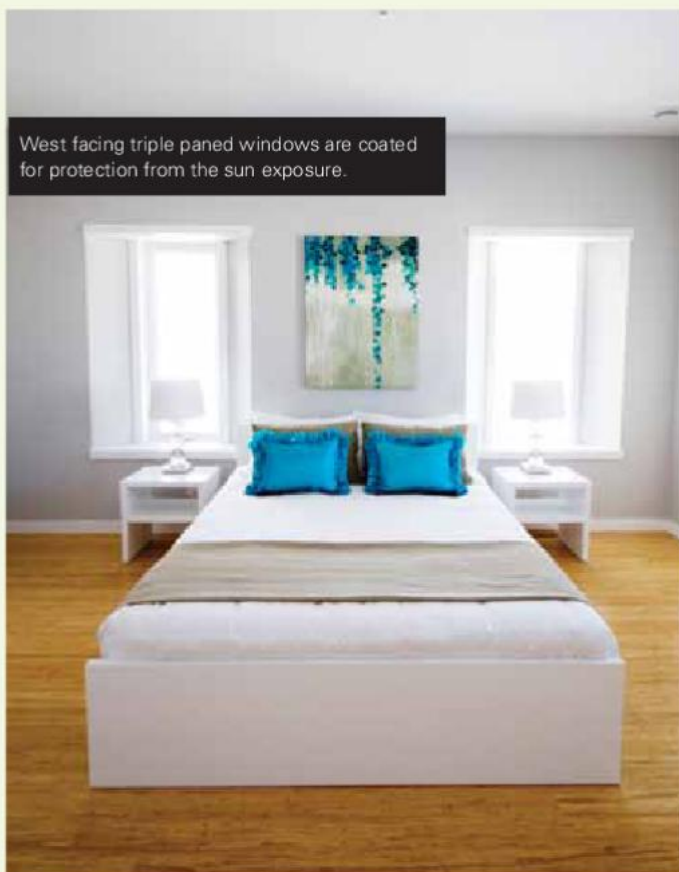
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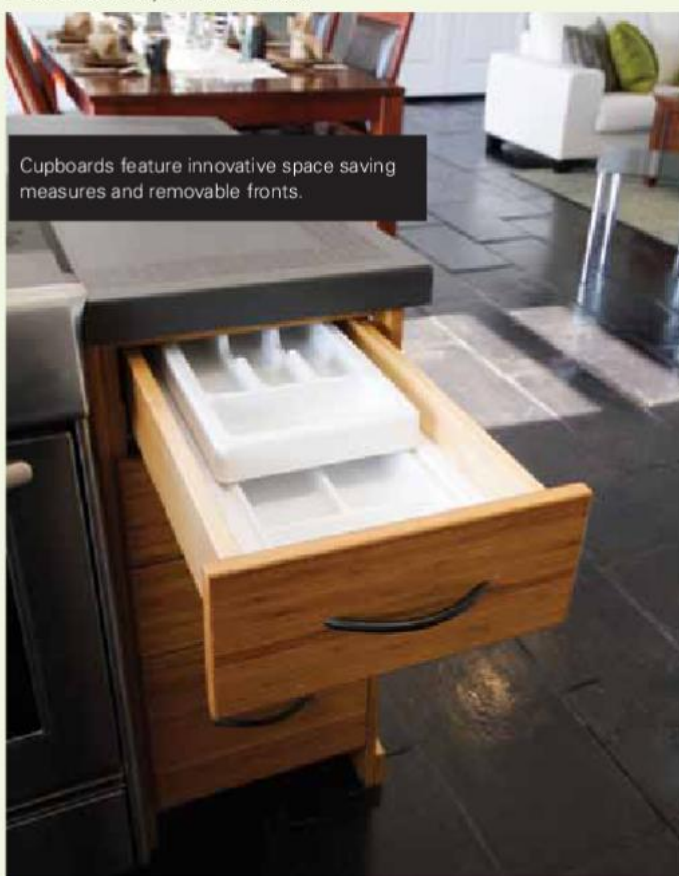
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West facing triple paned windows are coated for protection from the sun exposure.

Photos courtesy of Maki Photos



Cupboards feature innovative space saving measures and removable fronts.



Used furniture and reused materials were chosen to improve indoor air quality and improve impact on the environment.

LePage explains that the focus of his research is on the adoption of environmentally sustainable residential housing techniques. Always one to practice what he preaches, LePage founded VerEco Homes. He derived the name by combining ver, Latin for 'truly', with eco, a play on 'economical' and 'ecological.'

"The basis of what I'm trying to teach people is building 'smart green,'" he says. "It is building green, but economically – smart green. VerEco: truly economic, truly ecological."

In any home, energy gets consumed in three ways, LePage says: space heating, domestic hot water, and lights and appliances.

"I probably use basically the same amount of domestic hot water in Saskatoon as I do in Honolulu," he says. "It's the same with lights and appliances. I'm going to use the same amount. The big difference, and the big challenge living in this extreme climate here, is the space heating. When we're building net zero homes here in Saskatchewan, we're building them signifi-

cantly different than even BC would be or in the southern United States. So our focus was how to beat that space heating challenge."

The first thing was to find a way to shrink the space needs of a bungalow from a Canadian average of 1,600 square feet – a size dwarfed by most new construction now – down to 1,220 square feet, without sacrificing the home's usefulness or the lifestyle of its occupants.

"Compact design is a big part of energy saving," LePage says. "A family of four, and you need 4,500 square feet? It just makes no sense."

The size and construction of the house were important considerations not just to improve energy efficiency and reduce consumption, but also to meet one important – some would have said unachievable – goal: to get the price of construction down to \$120 per square foot, roughly the same as current conventional new home construction.

Looking at similar projects in Edmonton and Red Deer, LePage found costs typically

in the \$300 to \$400 per square foot range.

"One was over \$500 (per square foot)," LePage says. "They'd have geothermal and solar and heat pumps and everything all combined. They hadn't quite figured out how to work it all together. We knew we couldn't be building houses at \$500 per square foot. We had the advantage [of learning from their experiences], but it was really important to drop the price."

In the end, the VerEco home came in at \$128 per square foot for ready-to-move construction, excluding basement and solar collection systems, although LePage thinks that refinements in construction techniques could shave a little more off the cost of future homes.

"This home, from the time the first pen hit paper, was designed to be net-zero," LePage says. "Everything in it was designed to be net zero, lifestyle and cost. Everything. Every thought. If you bring me another plan and say try to make this net zero, I probably can't get there. I'd probably have to start over, and you'd end up with this house. But every house could be way more efficient than it is now, at very reasonable cost and very good payback."

One way VerEco kept the cost down was to consider its construction alternatives. The home is offered in three options: ready-to-move (RTM), pre-fabricated kit and site-built.

"Ready-to-move is quite a bit less expensive because you can build them all in one place," LePage says.

Currently, VerEco's focus is in markets around Saskatoon, primarily because the builders are nearby. LePage notes that he's begun receiving enquiries from other locations in the province, so he'll soon be looking for builders to train elsewhere. Within the next five years, he expects to be serving markets in Edmonton, Winnipeg, then expanding to Ontario and British Columbia.

"Net zero means it produces as much energy as it uses on an annual basis," LePage says. "People think of off-grid and confuse it with net zero. Off-grid means it is always self-sufficient. You have to design off-grid to meet the worst, coldest day of the year. You're designing for that 40-below day with four hours of sunshine. With net zero, the annual average in Saskatoon is

two degrees Celsius, which is somewhat easier than designing for that 40-below day. We can get away with just using solar. If you tried to go off-grid, you'd have to have something else [to supplement it]. You just couldn't do it on solar."

As well as being net zero, the VerEco home is intended to meet LEED Platinum certification. Achieving not only energy sustainability, but environmental sustainability, broadens your thinking, says LePage.

"Not only are you thinking about being energy efficient, but also how much water can I save, how can I reduce the amount of material I use, how can I produce less waste during construction of the house? It's a big challenge."

"Every decision we made, if we could get the material that



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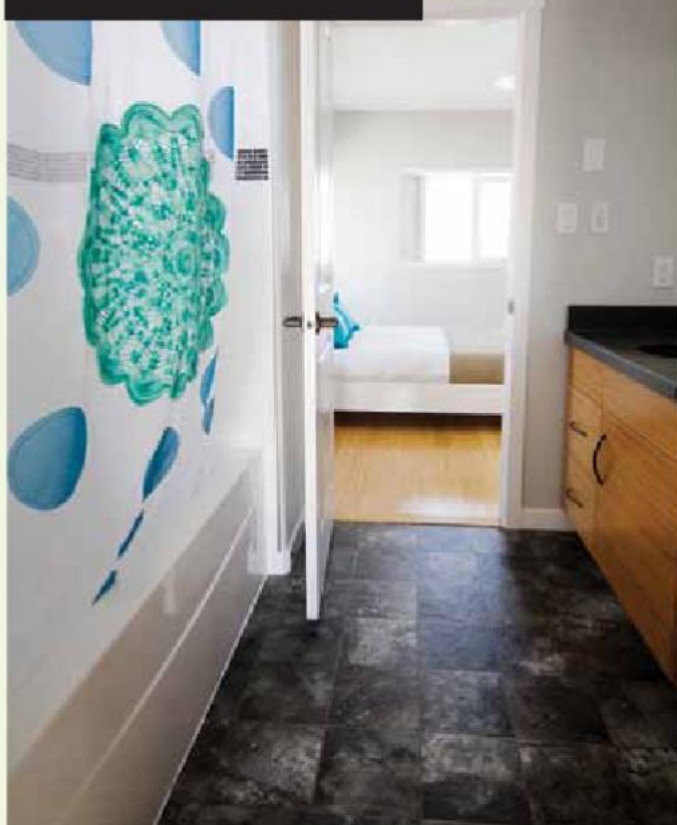


Photo courtesy of Maki Photos

was more sustainable, we'd use it."


"By designing the house 48 by 32 by 16, everything's in standard dimensions. It was very cost-effective to build. There was very little waste. That was done before we ever started building. All of that was in the design."

"We get a lot of older folks coming through on tours from the Western Development Museum. They'll say that's how they always built, that was the way they did it. For some reason we've forgotten how to build efficiently."

By making a net zero home that was appealing to live in at an affordable cost, LePage thinks the market is ready for widespread acceptance of this type of dwelling. The

VerEco home on display is the first of four styles that will be available. In addition, VerEco is developing unique technologies that will significantly reduce the cost of retrofitting current homes.

According to his research, LePage says these net zero homes will have the most appeal to empty-nesters building the homes they plan to live in during retirement and to new professionals looking for their first homes.

"It wouldn't be hard living in this house," LePage says of the display home. "It's very efficiently designed. Everybody wants a big mansion house, but what are you going to do with it? What do you need? I could easily live in this house." 

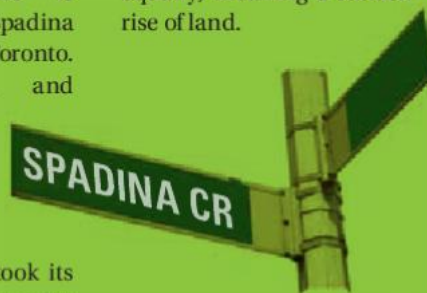
STREET NAMES

SPADINA CRESCENT

Spadina Crescent is named for Spadina Avenue in Toronto. Thomas Copland and other Temperance Colonists who had come from the Toronto area probably chose it.

The Toronto street took its name from three successive houses named Spadina. The house took its name from the phonetic Native *espadinong* then pronounced *spadeena*

(with all syllables counting equally) meaning a sudden rise of land.



From Saskatoon's History in Street Names by John Duerkop. Used with permission from Purish Publishing Ltd., Saskatoon.

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The Solar Panel as Art

Photos courtesy of Sarah Hall



Sarah Hall with her photovoltaic stained glass panels.

Over the last few months, even harried Saskatoon motorists couldn't miss the rising architectural structure taking shape in the University Heights neighborhood. There are layers of scaffolding, a giant cross and a busy construction crew all encircling the new edifice.

It's situated right next to St. Joseph High School and adjacent to the Forestry Farm Park.

That stately new addition to the community is Holy Family Cathedral. It's the first new Roman Catholic Cathedral to be built in Canada in fifty years. The

Cathedral is also breaking new ground with the green technology employed in its windows. "It's a world first," says Toronto-based artist Sarah Hall. "This is the first Cathedral whose windows integrate solar energy collection and stained glass."

The innovative stained glass, which combines glass and photovoltaic elements, was developed in collaboration with two German firms. There are 1,113 hand-soldered, silver polycrystalline solar cells embedded in the windows.

Hall says the *Lux Gloria* project was inspired by the glory of God and was commissioned for installation in the new \$28 million Holy Family Cathedral. The project is a unique opportunity for Hall to showcase her contemporary flair in 





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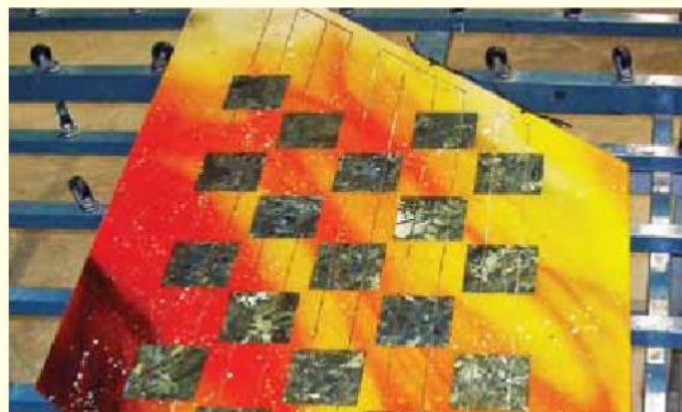
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a green context. "It's divine inspiration. It celebrates the vast prairie skies by day and the northern lights by night," says Hall.

Hall, who has completed four other green projects, likes to put a contemporary spin on her stained glass projects. "A lot of liturgical stained glass falls into The Good Shepherd style of windows," she says. This project explores the themes of creation, covenant,

incarnation, proclamation and revelation in abstract form.

The artist is "delighted" to be working on such a prestigious project and says she can't wait to see the *Lux Gloria* project once it's installed. The official dedication of Holy Family Cathedral takes place in November 2011. 

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HOME Reflections

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ON THE BUS: PUBLIC TRANSIT IN SASKATOON

Jeff O'Brien

Looking south past the King George Hotel, 1934.

Photo courtesy of the Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library

When Saskatoon became a city in 1906, it had a population of 4,500. But there was a settlement boom of monstrous proportions going on, and the city grew precipitously over the next few years. Public works were high on the civic agenda. If Saskatoon were to reap the benefits of the changes sweeping across the land, then it would have to become a modern city with modern infrastructure including an efficient, city-wide public transit system to move people quickly and cheaply from home to work to shopping and back again.

In 1911 the city contracted with a British syndicate to build


and operate an electric street railway system and a hydro-electric power station, which would replace the small, coal-fired station built earlier. The river turned out to be unsuited to the kind of hydro-electric development Saskatoon could afford (or provide a market for) and the idea fell through. Instead, the city built its own coal-fired plant at Avenue A and Spadina Crescent and, in June of 1912, started work on a publicly-owned streetcar system. Six months and \$500,000 later, on January 1, 1913, the streetcars of the Saskatoon Municipal Railway rolled out of the car barns for the first time.

It was an instant success. More than 5,000 people rode the streetcars the first day of operation. Those first streetcars sat only 32 passengers; one motorman boasted to have crammed 70 people into his car, and the newspaper reported the next day that everyone involved was "pleased as punch."

There were four lines initially: Mayfair to the University, Pleasant Hill to the Exhibition; 7th Avenue to 2nd Avenue and 19th Street; and Avenue H from 20th Street to 15th Street. At the end of 1913, a fifth line was built to Sutherland, travelling out of the city down 8th Street to what is

now Acadia Drive, and then north to 108th Street. The Sutherland cars ran hourly, and Sutherland Town Council demanded a heated bus shelter at the terminus so that women and children would not have to be exposed to the unseemly atmosphere inside the hotel that stood where the Mac's store is now.

Overall, a total of 3.4 million passengers took the streetcars in Saskatoon in 1913, riding a total of 640,000 miles. Pretty good for a system with only 12 cars on 12 miles of track in a city of 28,000 people!

The streetcar lines tied Saskatoon together, from 



City car barns, 1913

Photo courtesy of City of Saskatoon archives

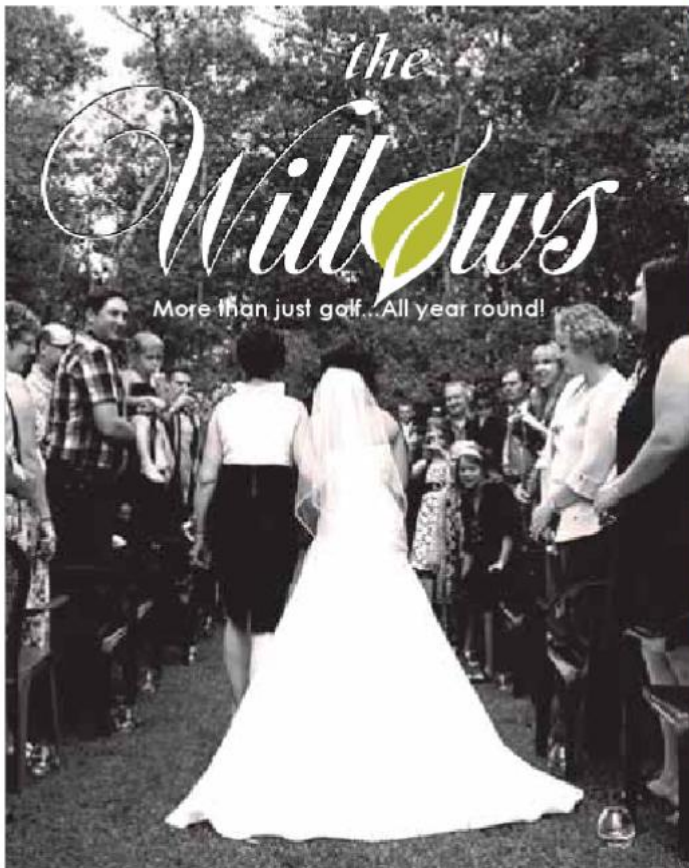
Cities need buses. In today's car culture, public transit often seems to take a back seat to private vehicles, particularly in places like Saskatoon where it's still easy to get around. But streetcars, buses and subways have been part of the urban landscape for nearly 200 years, and if the experience of other cities is any guide, not only are they not going away, they are going to become more important as we grow.

Horse-drawn public buses are reported to have operated in Paris for a short time in 1662, and there was a horse-drawn passenger rail system in Wales as early as 1807. But the idea of municipal public transit didn't really take hold until the 1820s, when a clever entrepreneur established a shuttle bus to take passengers from the city centre in Nantes, France to public baths he owned on the edge of town. He soon discovered that just as many riders were interested in getting off at stops along the way, and from that developed the *voiture omnibus*, or "carriage for all" which carried paying passengers along a set route through the city. The idea spread to other cities in France, and in 1829 jumped the English Channel to London and across the Atlantic Ocean to New York.

east to west and north to south. In a relatively spread-out city with few motor vehicles, it was pretty much the only game in town. Population density maps of Saskatoon show snakelike extensions along the streetcar lines: west along 20th Street to St. Paul's Hospital, south on Lorne to the Exhibition grounds, and north to Mayfair and up 7th Avenue North. The Sutherland line (converted to bus service in 1938) served not only the town of Sutherland, but also the isolated homes and businesses scattered out along 8th street, past the city's fringe and far beyond the lights of the core residential and commercial districts. When Montgom-

ery was settled after the Second World War, the residents depended on the bus that ran up 11th Street to Intercontinental Packers as their life-line to the stores and services of distant Saskatoon.

It's easy to see a correlation between historical events and the number of people using public transit. Ridership plummeted during the Great Depression of the 1930s, when for many the price of even a streetcar ticket was too much. The Second World War erased the unemployment crisis of the 1930s, but brought with it gas rationing, which may be one reason for the spike in ridership through that decade. On a per capita basis, 1946



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March, 1927 – the Sutherland line.

Photo courtesy of the Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library


was the best year for Saskatoon streetcars, with every man, woman and child racking up more than 260 trips. But the Age of the Automobile was upon us. The growth in car ownership during the 1950s was staggering – city officials even recommended closing the downtown to private vehicles to ease congestion – and by 1956 per capita transit use had dropped by half. In the mid-1970s, transit use rose again, perhaps not coincidentally just after the catastrophic increases in gas prices that followed the 1973 OPEC oil embargo. More recently there has been a noticeable increase in ridership since the University implemented its universal bus pass program (“Upass”) in 2007.

Today, while twice as many people are taking public transit as they did in 1913,

the per capita ridership has declined from 121 trips per person down to 53 (up from an all-time low of 41 in 2003). Nevertheless, the future belongs to transit. Things like the increasing price of gas, concerns about pollution and global warming, increasing congestion and the cost of downtown parking mean that the people of Saskatoon are once again looking at public transit as a cheap, efficient, and sustainable way to get around. There will always be those for whom taking a bus to work will be impossible, but as the city grows, enhanced services like light rail and dedicated lines out to places like Martensville and Warman will make transit an even more attractive option for people trying to figure out the easiest way to get to work in the morning. 





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A study by Sears Canada shows that more and more Canadians are putting energy efficiency high on their list when buying appliances. The study mapped buying tendencies from 2008 to the present.

"This shift in consumer behaviour demonstrates the degree to which Canadians have embraced the critical message about energy efficiency," said Dr. James Gray-Donald in a news release issued jointly by Sears Canada and the

World Wildlife Federation. Dr. Gray-Donald, who is Sustainability Leader at Sears Canada, went on to say, "Many of our customers who are already recycling and have some CFLs are keen to upgrade to energy efficient appliances in order to control their energy bills and reduce their impact on the planet."

The study also showed that a growing number of Canadians are willing to pay a premium to get the most efficient appliances. The WWF and Sears

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Canada went on to point out that this trend continued despite the economic downturn, especially in the heavily populated provinces of Quebec and Ontario.

The increase in purchases of high-efficiency purchases was greatest in Quebec (270%) and lowest on the prairies (108%). Data for the other regions showed the Atlantic provinces at 195%; Ontario at 160%, and British Columbia at 140%. 

Source: World Wildlife Federation, April 2011



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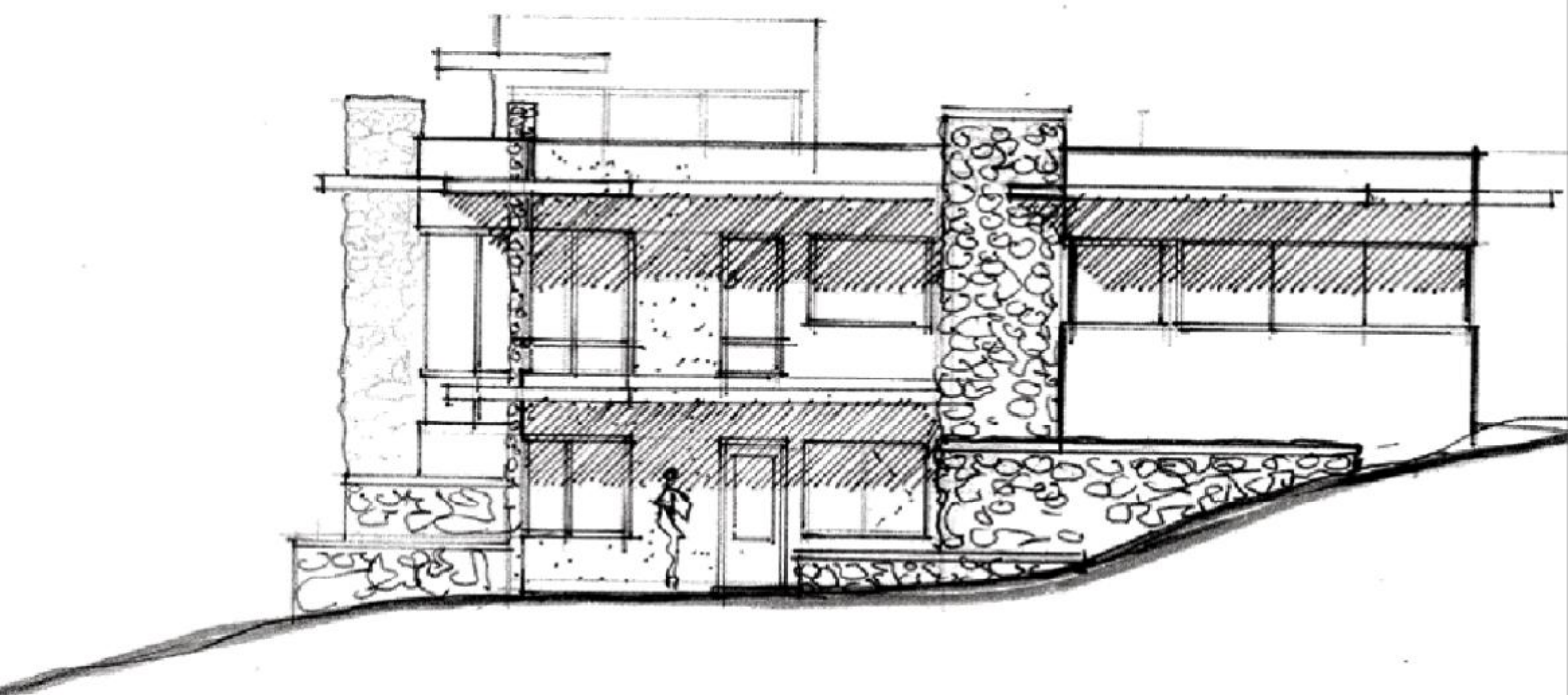
KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



A model created of the home by Heney Klypak shows the Frank Lloyd Wright principle of "site responsiveness."

*"No house should ever be on a hill...It should be of the hill.
Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together each
the happier for the other."*

— FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



PRELIMINARY ELEVATION/SHADING STUDY

Heney Klypak has designed and built award-winning spaces for commercial and residential clients. But he's always hoped to follow his own design desires. Deeply influenced by the importance of site responsiveness of Frank Lloyd Wright and Richard Neutra, Heney longed to one day create his own dream house.

It seems many brilliant ideas, from a perfect wedding

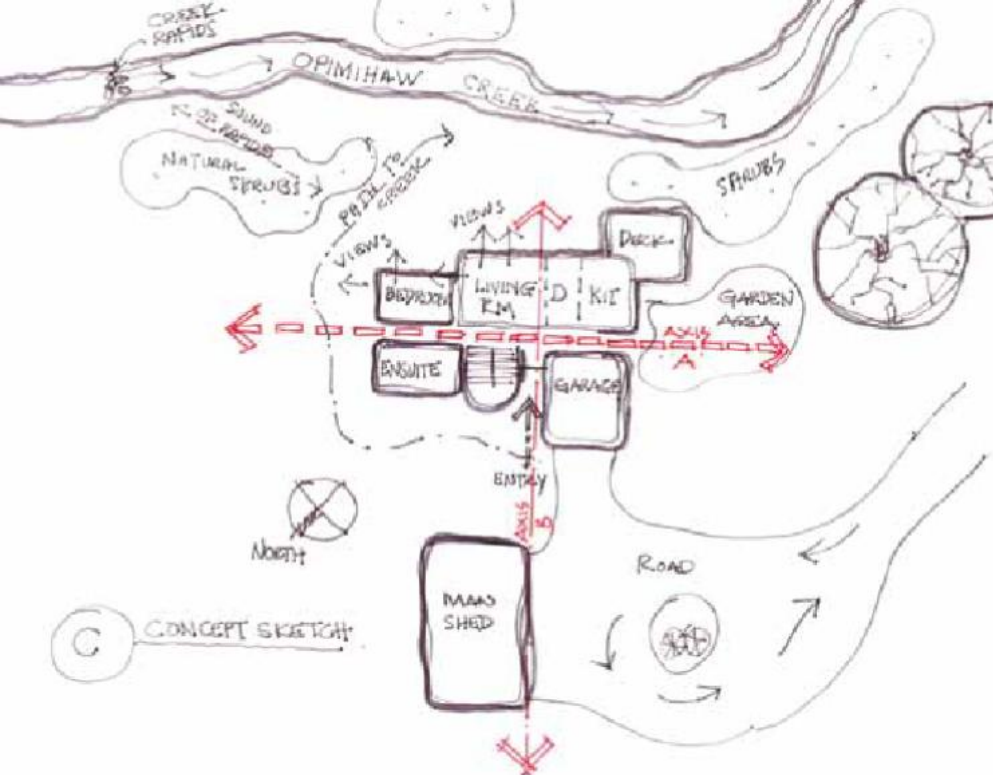
dress design to an exquisite bouillabaisse, start out as a few notes and lines sketched on a serviette or the back of a gas receipt. So it was with Opimihaw Run, Heney's modernist counterpoint to a natural pristine prairie setting.

Saskatoon based architect Heney and Gwen, a textile artist, dreamed from a bench overlooking a ravine on their newly acquired 80 acres. Heney's sketches filled his

notebook with a design that hugs the horizon in Frank Lloyd Wright's "prairie house" style. Neighboring Wanuskewin Heritage Site administration expressed a desire in seeing the home design responsive to the natural setting.

"They felt an 'urban style' would take away from the pristine character that surrounds Wanuskewin," Heney explains. "We kept this in mind when developing

the exterior appearance and the color picks up the hues of natural prairie grasses and tree bark." The Klypaks also gave a nod to more recent local inhabitants. The silver corrugated metal clad to the overhangs was a response to a prairie farm icon – the metal grain storage bin.



TASK ANALYSIS

Within the context of purposefulness, Heney knew that each space and its purpose needed to be carefully planned. While some designers grapple with form versus function, Heney knew one couldn't exist effectively without the other. They wanted a design that would maximize the utility of all spaces and reduce the home's impact on the environment and the pocketbook.

"We began with a room analysis for each space," explains Heney. Heney takes his own clients through this exercise to help them not only visualize each area, but also zero in on specifics. Questions include where the room needs to be in relation to others, its feel and character, and particulars like communications, electrical, plumbing and millwork.

For the Klypaks, some questions led to significant changes to their wish list. "We had thought of sustainable cork as the main floor material but research indicated cork restricts the efficiency of radiant in-floor heat." In fact, he adds, "Carpet is the worst thing to use over in-floor heated floor decks." They opted for polished concrete, except on stairs and in the kitchen where cork, a renewable resource, will cushion their steps.

"We'd never lived in a house with a hard surface so we weren't sure about the concrete," says Gwen, "We did the cork in the kitchen area where we stand for periods of time at the island, the counter, and sink. It's warm, easy to look after and has a little give. I love this floor!"



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THE BASIC BIGGIES

Heney's first impressions for the house and how the spaces would sit on the site were developed in schematic form. The concept developed further as the couple responded to the room analysis questions. Discussions about efficiencies and features ranged from small energy-saving practices right through to structural considerations. Some of the big decisions involved the very core of the home to ensure the house almost heats and cools itself.

The home's primary heating system is in-floor hot water heating powered by a Viesman boiler, purported to be the most energy efficient boiler on the market. Concrete floors in 95 per cent of the home act as a heat sink, reducing the frequency of supplementing heat from the in-floor heat system.

Snug is an apt adjective regarding insulation. The insulated concrete form (ICF) foundation system gives approximately an R-26 value. Windows are triple pane sealed glazing units complete with two loe-E coatings plus argon gas fill between the glass panes. Roof insulation is R-40. Exterior walls are R-30.

"We paid a lot of attention to providing air flow throughout the entire house," says Gwen. Heney designed all the windows so we have lovely cross ventilation when they're open."

CIRQUE DE SOLEI

Early on as the design evolved, Heney thought about sunshine - lots of it, the direction of it, the benefits and problems associated with it. Further design development focused on strategies to reduce heat

build-up with exterior shading devices to block out direct sun penetration at different times of the day and year.

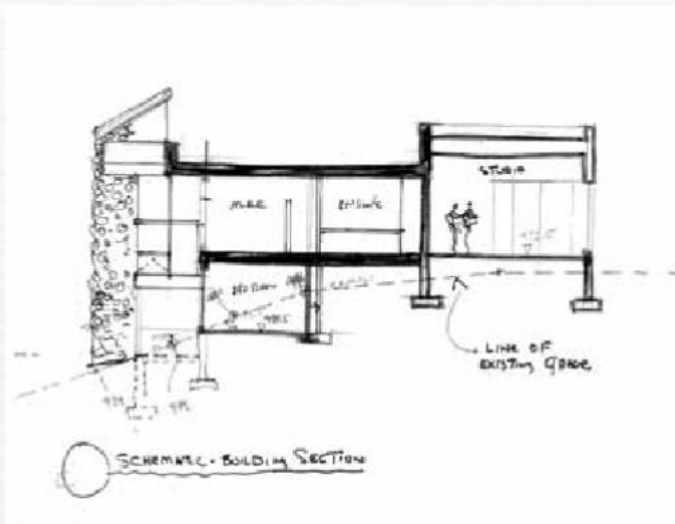
"A large expanse of glass facing southeast provides us with passive solar heat gain. By the time the sun might be a problem, around noon, the large overhangs provide shading. However, louvered sunshades block direct sun penetration into the lower level windows. These will be installed this summer. In winter, the glass combined with the thermal mass of the concrete floor provides the passive solar system for the home. A white granular roof membrane reflects sunlight, which helps reduce interior heat gain.

Smaller things are considered, too. When current interior lamps require replacement, they will be swapped out with LED lamps. This alone reduces energy consumption by at least 75 per cent. Because the large glass areas are such a prominent feature, they greatly reduce the need for artificial light during the day.

WATER WORKS

Rural homeowners develop a keen sense of appreciation for water and saving it for a not-so-rainy day. Heney included water conservation as the plan evolved. While water for their own use comes from a lower pressure water line from SaskWater, they take benefit from Mother Nature for other needs.

"We harvest rain from our roof into three holding tanks with a combined water storage capacity of 3,000 gallons," explains Heney. "The water is intended for garden watering and for grass fire protection."



Watering lawns doesn't fit with this xeriscaped space. The Klypaks are mindful this area belongs to those other than themselves. "We reduced the impact of the house on the natural prairie by restricting the extent of landscaping to six metres around the home," Heney says. "The rest is undisturbed prairie."

IN FOR THE LONG HAUL

Heney's SGI projects involve converting homes to be more accessible for people who have become disabled. This hasn't been lost on Heney. The couple's final plan captured forward thinking about potential problems

with stairs as they age. The transition from outside to in is all on one level and all doorways are wide. All doors and cabinets feature levers rather than difficult-to-manipulate knobs. Washrooms are designed for accessibility. Two showers have wide doors and no curb to step over, achieved by recessing the floor deck for proper shower floor drainage. The planning goes even deeper.

"We've given a lot of thought to ease of living as we get older. We have an elevator shaft that's not functional now, other than as a wine cellar," Gwen laughs. But it's ready for the instal-

lation of the elevator itself when they need it. "We're hoping to grow old here and do so very comfortably."


DESIGN EVOLUTION TAKES TIME

The Klypaks secured their dream piece of prairie over a handshake with the farmer quite quickly, but it took over two years to iron out subdivision and road access issues. While anxious to get their home built, the couple used the time well for the planning process.

"After continuous refinement, we ended up with a finalized floor layout which we ultimately built," says Heney.

"This final plan incorporated the evolution of our ideas about how we made the home more compact, with every space tailored for its purpose."

Heney cites a statistic that suggests 70 per cent of a person's lifespan is spent indoors. "There is a direct relationship to someone's well-being and the environment in which they spend most of their time," he insists.

"Knowing the home's impact on the environment is low, that form and function work beautifully together, and that it supports stress-free living, is all part of the design." 

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Photos courtesy of InStone Distribution

or as a bar feature. Both exterior and interior applications have the added benefit of being a barrier to both noise and the cold.

"The energy savings one realizes with Quality Stone installed are really substantial," says Wilson. "It's got a 6 or 7 R-Value which would be the equivalent of actual rigid insulation, so it's like insulating the outside of the house."

"Older homes are typically rated at a 12-15 R-Value," says Wilson. "Putting up rigid insulation when they re-do their siding will generally increase that value by 5, and bring it up to what new houses are sitting at, which is about a 20. Putting our stone product on your exterior or interior walls does the same thing, so it's one less step for a homeowner."

Insulation values aside, Wilson believes one of the most attractive features is the ease and cost-savings of installing the product yourself. "Someone could actually pick this right up at a store themselves," says Wilson. "It's very light and they could throw it in a truck and install it in three or four hours in a weekend, rather than literally taking days and days to try and put up cultured stone – or paying a lot of money to get a mason or stonemason in to do the work."

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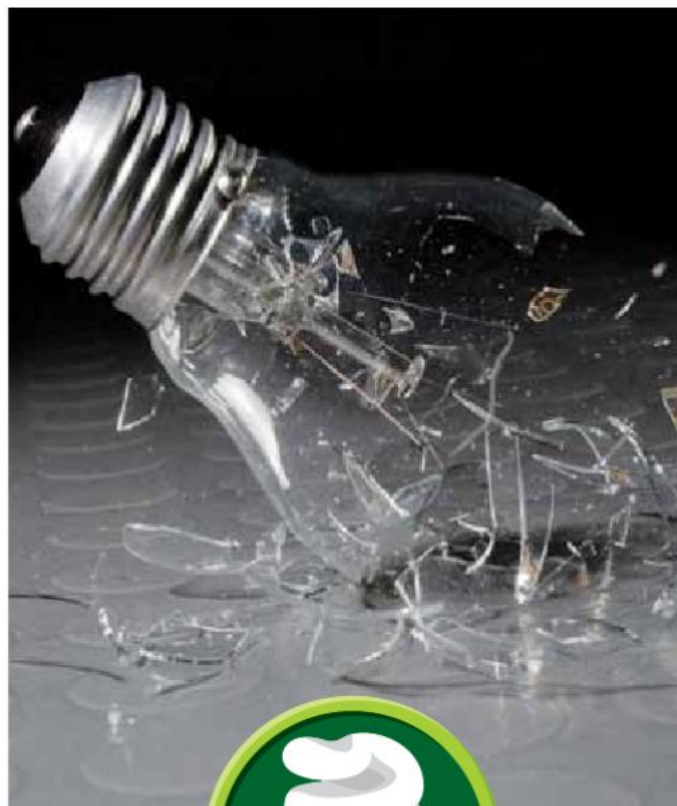
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The Light Bulb Obituary

Whether you're a real person or a cartoon character, the universal symbol for every bright idea you've ever had is the incandescent light bulb. However, thanks to the epiphanies of progress, the light grows dim for this iconic bulb. We'll still be able to tell 'how many does it take to change a light bulb' jokes, but in Canada the bulb in the joke won't be incandescent. Starting in 2012, it will be against the law to sell the now-outdated bulbs we've all grown up with.

The impetus for this change is to build a better light bulb – that is to say, a more energy efficient lighting source. It's all part of a plan to cut down on emissions of greenhouse gases. The plan also boasts electricity bill savings for the average homeowner to the tune of about \$50 a year.

The next heir to the throne of illumination is the spiral-shaped compact fluorescent lamp (CFL). CFLs have a lot of energy-related advantages, like being 300 to 400 times more efficient than the old bulbs. However, they also have their cons. First of all, a CFL is about eight to ten times the price of an incandescent bulb. Secondly, they can also be larger than incandescent, which means they won't fit certain fixtures. They may also produce electromagnetic interference that can affect everything from your cell phone to the reception on your radio. They can't be used with many dimmers and their light



source can be exaggerated more than 15 per cent because of the time it takes the bulb to warm up.

Beyond these issues, the CFLs have also been at the centre of controversy. Like the tube-shaped fluorescent precursors you may remember flickering in school, CFLs contain mercury, which is essential to a fluorescent's ability to provide white light. However, mercury is also highly toxic and especially harmful to the brains of both unborn




and growing children. When a bulb breaks, mercury escapes as a vapour or a fine powder that can be airborne or settle into the carpet.

Now, when you break a bulb, you will be expected to open the windows and evacuate the room for around 20 minutes, as well as shut down all your heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems, and clean it all up with the precision of a CSI technician. You have to admit, the CFL does sound a

bit suspect for a technology that's supposed to make our lives better.

At this point, the safe future of lighting will probably be the Light Emitting Diode (LED) technology, which started as the light on your phone or the bars on your alarm clock. The LED bulbs are without a filament, low in power consumption, yet enjoy an even longer life span than CFLs (20 years in some cases!). Uniquely, LEDs point light in one single direction, though companies like General Electric are also developing omni-directional outputs, where the light will shine 360 degrees around the source, so you can have your cake and eat it too.


At the moment, LEDs are not evolved enough to rival conventional lighting because they don't have the necessary light output. Once researchers lock down the technology, which advances every day, it is generally assumed that LEDs will become the dominant lighting for the home and workplace. One can hope that manufacturers release an LED bulb shaped in homage to the old incandescent bulbs, so that we may keep the symbol of innovation as well as preserving the continuity of our favourite cartoons for generations to come. 

CRAIG SILLIPHANT



Yard Art

You don't have to limit art to the inside of your home. These beautiful pieces created by artist Diane Langlois are as durable as they are eye-catching. The sun and rain are not a problem as the art is a reproduction of an original creation by the artist on to a durable flag material. Carried by Willow Studio, the owner Sandra Young says the art, "creates a focal point outdoors." 

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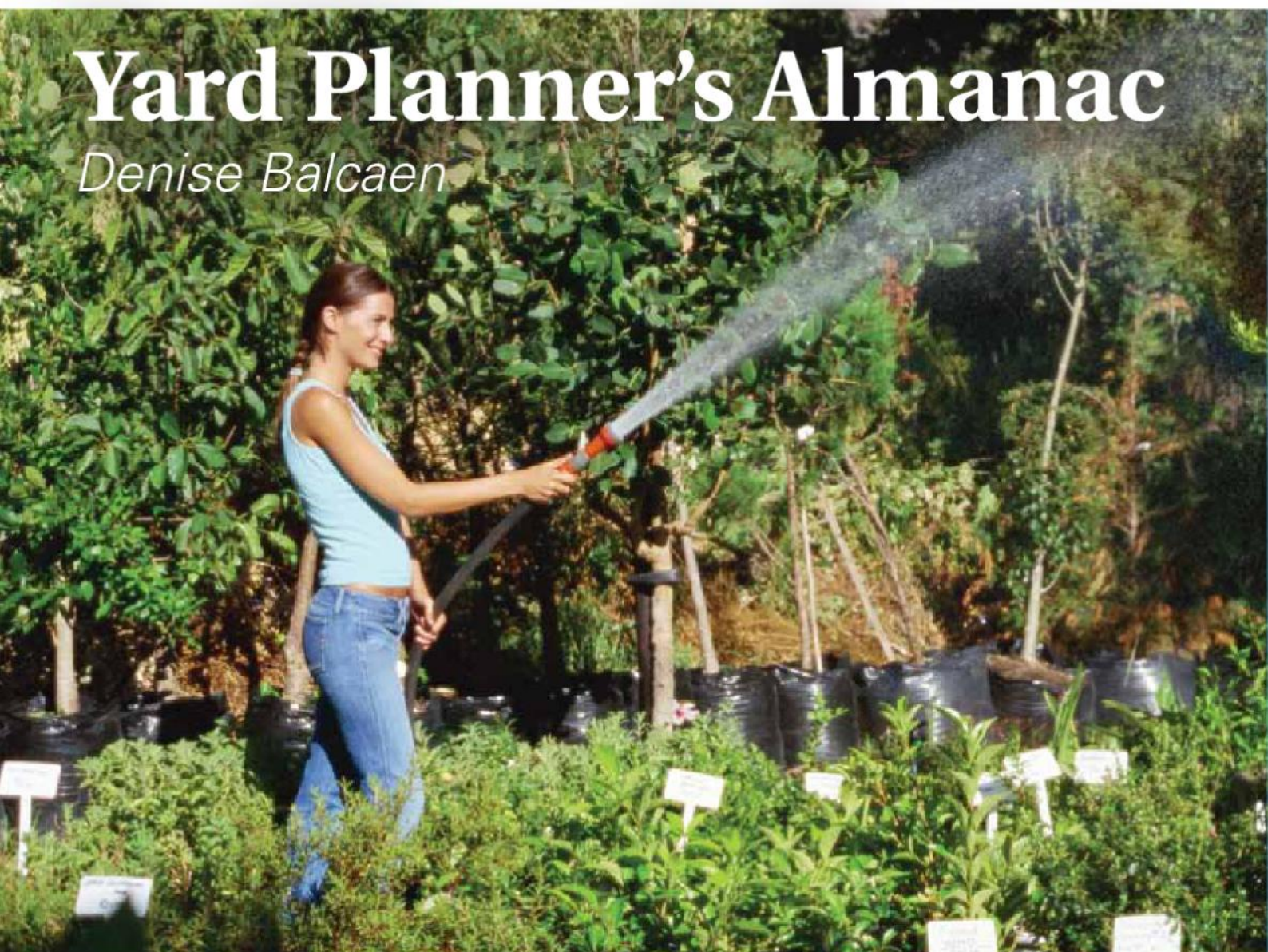


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June 1: Sunrise 4:52 a.m. Sunset 9:18 p.m.

June 15: Sunrise 4:45 a.m. Sunset 9:29 p.m.

ADD potted plants. The larger the pot the better since it will require less frequent watering, hold moisture longer, and present a stronger visual impact than an assortment of smaller pots. The use of 'pot feet' on wood surfaces eliminates moisture damage concerns. Instead of annuals, try planting colorful houseplants like a burgundy rubber tree or a yellow-green variegated reflexa plant. You can pick them up at big box stores for \$10-\$20 or less. Heck, why not pot up a grouping! When placed outside in the shade or semi-shade they grow much,

much faster than when indoors – and what a great way to create some WOW! in your landscape.

KICK START your lawn! A healthy lawn contributes a lot to the look of a well groomed yard. Grass is the lowest maintenance of any ground cover so you'll want to start with a good raking and dethatch, proper aeration and an application of lawn fertilizer. Not only will your yard look better but also your lawn will get a leg up on the growing season. Lawns require 1 - 1 1/2" of water a week or roughly 1/2 hour 

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weekly. Cut grass no less than 1 1/2" - longer grass blades conserve moisture and shade the roots, keeping them cool which in turn encourages deeper root growth which results in a healthier lawn.

While on the topic of lawns don't forget to DETAIL the edges with a flat head spade or a 'mowing strip' border. The mowing strip acts as an

edge for your mower wheels to run along giving you a clean, finished look. My fave is to lay bricks end to end flush with the lawn level. Use edging where your lawn borders any planted area or even along a deck step or fence line. Then congratulate yourself for keeping that annoying 'whippersnipping' to a minimum!

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JULY

Average Daytime High: 25°C

Average Daytime Low: 11.5°C

July 1: Sunrise 4:50 a.m. Sunset 9:31 p.m.

July 15: Sunrise 5:04 a.m. Sunset 9:21 p.m.

ASSESS your plants. Consider how much time is required to maintain each; do they drop messy fruit or berries but afford a great privacy screen between you and your wonderful but nosy neighbors? Balance the pros and cons of living **WITH** or **WITHOUT** it and make a decision to either keep and work **WITH** it or remove entirely and start fresh. I am a firm believer that if you have a tree, shrub

or perennial that is not living up to your expectations, you should remove it and use that valuable space for something you'll truly treasure.

Take another look at areas of your yard that you could use, but for some reason, just don't. Is there a small area you could use as a 'pocket garden' by creating privacy with a man-made screen or trellis? Or perhaps you can define a portion of a large space or accent a foreground view with

a decorative trellis on a fence – which makes better use of your space by leading the eye up. (Trellises can become a 'piece of art' on their own, even without a vine to cover them) Use **VERTICAL GARDENING** to make the best use of any space and create a different look entirely, whether it is 8' high or a low 4' high border.

Don't let weed growth get the best of you! Weeds are much easier to control when small. Keep the job manageable by doing a little each day, and don't let them

go to seed. Once you have a weed-free surface around trees and perennials, apply 2"- 4" of wood chip '**MULCH**'. Wood mulch soon packs down by about half, creating a weed barrier, preventing moisture loss, and giving your beds a finished look. In a new yard try filling in the planned perennials beds with mulch to put off extra labor and cost until next year. Use the temporary 'mulched bed' to display a charming garden bench or a striking pot filled with plants. (see **JUNE** suggestions) 

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AUGUST

Average Daytime High: 24.6°C

Average Daytime Low: 10.4°C

August 1: Sunrise 5:20 a.m. Sunset 8:57 p.m.

August 15: Sunrise 5:30 a.m. Sunset 8:31 p.m.

Consistently **INSPECT** plants for pest or disease problem. Many insect problems can be solved with a strong spray of water once or twice a week. Remove (i.e. "deadhead") spent blossoms and also deadhead large flowering plants such as lilies, daylilies and roses to prevent seed formation, encourage re-bloom and keep plants looking nicer. Leave the flower heads of iris, Karl Foerster grass and

hydrangeas for late season or even winter interest (cuts back on your maintenance time, too).

Soil is one of the most critical elements of your landscape. It is vital to use good soil in new yards but equally important to **AMMEND** soil in mature yards. A complaint I hear often is, "Nothing will grow here!" The best solution is simply to work nutrients and organic matter into the soil. Whether using well-rotted manure

or compost, dig it into a new bed or rake it on the surface of existing planted areas. If I could recommend only **ONE THING**, it would be to improve the very foundation of your yard - your soil! A good rule is to use 12" deep of topsoil for new perennial beds; when topdressing older sites, spread 1" - 2" on the surface in late fall or early spring.

Don't forget to **CLEAN YOUR WINDOWS!** The cleaner the outside of your

house, the better your yard is going to look. As a bonus, it is a pleasure to view your beautiful yard through crystal clear glass. Even in inclement weather - rain, snow, sleet or hail - you should be able to at least enjoy the look of your yard even if you can't actually be out in it.

Enjoy your yard renovations as they come together, keep them simple, and remember: half the fun is in delighting in each stage of the process! 🏡



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HOME is written for readers like us - for people who don't have a \$2 million home in Saskatoon, and for those who do. What HOME readers all have in common is a desire to make the most of where they live. We can do that by decorating it, envisioning it, saving up for it, and - as in the case of our Street Names and Reflections features - learning more about it.

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